

## REMARKS

### Amendments to the claims

Claim 17 comprises the features of original claim 1 and, further, features disclosed in original claims 4, 5, 6 and 10 in reworded manner.

Claim 18 comprises the features of original claim 10 directed to the actuator of the emergency release unit in reworded manner.

Claim 19 comprises the features of original claim 10 directed to the force-generating element in reworded manner.

Claim 20 comprises the features of original claim 1 and, further, features disclosed in original claims 4, 5, 6 and 11 in reworded manner.

Claim 21 corresponds with original claim 14.

Claim 22 corresponds with original claim 12.

Claim 23 comprises the features of the first feature complex of original claim 2.

Claim 24 comprises the features of the second feature complex of original claim 2.

Claim 25 corresponds with original claim 3.

Claim 26 corresponds with original claim 7.

Claim 27 corresponds with original claim 8.

Claim 28 corresponds with original claim 9.

Claim 29 corresponds with original claim 13.

Claim 30 corresponds with original claim 15.

### Novelty

US-4,109,637 (US'637) discloses a latch mechanism comprising two actuators 46 and 48, one for effecting a crossover into a locking state and the other for effecting a crossover into a release state. In contrast thereto, claims 17 and 20 define blocking and release units having one actuator, which effects both a crossover into the blocking state and a crossover into the release state.

US'637 does not disclose any emergency release unit as defined in claims 17 and 20. Thus, the subject matters according to claims 17 and 20 are novel in view of US'637.

US-6,036,241 (US'241) discloses a locking mechanism for an appliance door, wherein a single actuator 146 is used. In contrast thereto, claims 17 and 20 define two actuators. Thus, the subject matters according to claims 17 and 20 are novel in view of US'241.

### Obviousness

Primarily it has to be noted that the latch mechanism according to US'637 and the locking mechanism according to US'241 exhibit completely different designs that are not compatible. In particular, the mechanical structural arrangements employed for effecting crossovers into blocking and release states are such that combinations of these arrangements are not obvious. Rather, considering one or more aspects of one of these prior art documents for modifying the teaching of the other prior art document, in particular as regards the actuators and their functions and operations, would require a complete redesign of the prior art teaching to be modified. At least for that reason, an ordinarily skilled person would not have combined US'637 and US'241.

Even assuming a combination of US'637 and US'241, the subject matters according to claims 17 and 20 are not rendered obvious by these prior art documents. US'637 discloses one actuator for effecting a crossover into a blocking state and one actuator for effecting a crossover into a release state. US'241 discloses one actuator effecting all crossovers of its locking mechanism. Replacing one of the actuators used in the latch mechanism according to US'637 by the actuator 146 according to US'241 results in an arrangement wherein one actuator effects a crossover into a blocking state or a release state and another actuator also effects this crossover and the further crossovers.

In other words, such a combination would result in an arrangement, wherein one crossover is effected by two actuators simultaneously. An ordinarily skilled person would not have carried such a combination that results in an unnecessary redundancy.

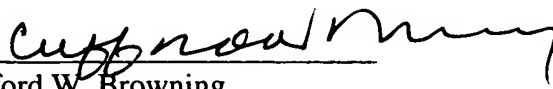
Even assuming an ordinarily skilled person would have carried out such a combination, the resulting arrangement would differ from the subject matters according to claims 17 and 20 as follows. Claims 17 and 20 recite that the blocking and release unit comprises one actuator responsible for crossovers into the blocking and release states. In contrast thereto, the assumed combination of US'637 and US'241 would result in an arrangement wherein two actuators effect a crossover into a blocking state or a release state.

Further, claims 17 and 20 recite that the emergency release unit comprises an actuator in addition to the actuator of the blocking and release unit and that the emergency release unit's actuator provides functions related only to the states of the emergency release unit.

In contrast thereto, the assumed combination of US'637 and US'241 would result in an arrangement wherein one actuator, that can effect all crossovers of the assumed arrangement provides functions related to both blocking and release states on the one hand, and states associated with an emergency on the other hand.

As a result, the subject matter of claims 17 and 20 is not obvious over US'637 in view of US'241.

Respectfully submitted:

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